

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4-9, and 11-22 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 9, 16 and 17 are amended. Support for amendments to claims 1, 9, 16 and 17 can be found at least at Figs. 2 and 3, and the corresponding description in the specification. No new matter is added.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant appreciates the Office Action's indication that claims 21 and 22 are allowed. Applicant respectfully submits that the other pending claims are allowable for at least the reasons discussed below.

II. The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

The Office Action rejects claims 9, 15, 17, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Japanese Publication No. 2003-005515 to Iwasaki et al. (Iwasaki); rejects claims 1, 2, 8, 16, 18, and 20 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Iwasaki in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,495,322 to Wada et al. (Wada); rejects claims 4 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Iwasaki in view of Wada as applied to claim 1, and in further view of Iwata; rejects claim 6 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Iwasaki in view of Wada, and Iwata as applied to claim 5, and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,064,847 to Iwamatsu et al. (Iwamatsu); rejects claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Iwasaki in view of Wada as applied to claim 1, and further in view of Iwata and Iwamatsu; rejects claim 13 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Iwasaki in view of Iwata as applied to claim 12, and further in view of Iwamatsu; and rejects claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Iwasaki as applied to claim 9 and further in view of Iwata and Iwamatsu. The rejections are respectfully traversed for at least the following reasons.

None of the applied references teach or suggest, alone or in permissible combination, a developing device wherein "the removing member is positioned vertically above the supplying member and upstream of the supplying member in the rotational direction of the

developer-carrying member; the removing member rotates such that a peripheral surface of the removing member opposing the developer-carrying member moves in the same direction as the peripheral surface of the developer-carrying member opposing the removing member at a contact position with the peripheral surface of the developer-carrying member," as recited in independent claim 1, and as similarly recited in independent claim 9 (emphasis added).

Similarly, none of the applied references teach or suggest, alone or in permissible combination, an image forming apparatus wherein "the removing member is positioned vertically above the supplying member and upstream of the supplying member in the rotational direction of the developer-carrying member; the removing member rotates such that a peripheral surface of the removing member opposing the developer-carrying member moves in the same direction as the peripheral surface of the developer-carrying member opposing the removing member at a contact position with the peripheral surface of the developer-carrying member," as recited in independent claim 16, and as similarly recited in independent claim 17 (emphasis added). In other words, the removing member and the developer-carrying member, which contact each other, rotate in the same direction at the contact position, as shown in Figs. 2 and 3 of the present application. None of the applied references teach or suggest this feature.

The Office Action acknowledges on pages 5 and 6 that Iwasaki does not teach "wherein the developer-carrying member rotates in a rotational direction such that the peripheral surface of the developer-carrying member opposing the supply member moves vertically downward; the moving member is positionally vertically above the supply member and the upstream of the supply member in the rotational direction of the developer-carrying member." Furthermore, the alleged two members (reference numbers 1, 4, 11 and 17) of Iwasaki, which contact each other, rotate in opposite directions to each other at the contact position. Thus, Iwasaki fails to teach or suggest this feature.

Further, contrary to the Office Action assertion, Wada fails overcome the deficiencies of Iwasaki (as applied to claims 1 and 16).

In Wada, the alleged removing member 10 is a thin metallic plate that does not move and is in direct contact with the developing member 3 (Fig. 1; col. 8, line 66-line 2, col. 9 of Wada). Accordingly, the thin plate member 10 of Wada does not rotate such that a peripheral surface of the removing member opposing the developer-carrying member moves in the same direction as the peripheral surface of the developer-carrying member opposing the removing member while in contact with the peripheral surface of the developer-carrying member, as recited in claims 1 and 16. Thus, Wada lacks the required suggestion or motivation under 35 U.S.C. §103 to modify the device of Iwasaki to achieve the desired features of the independent claims.

Furthermore, the other applied references fail to overcome the deficiencies of Iwasaki and Wada.

Thus, for at least these reasons, independent claims 1, 9, 16 and 17 are patentable over the applied references. Further, claims 2, 4-8, 12-15 and 18-20, which variously depend from independent claims 1, 9 and 16, are also patentable over the applied references for at least the reasons discussed above, as well as for the additional features they recite. Withdrawal of the rejections is thus respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of all pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:
Petition for Extension of Time

Date: November 7, 2006

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